

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /072 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6558

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 2829

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KE

SUBJECT: FORMER VICE-PRESIDENT OGINGA ODINGA ANNOUNCES RETURN
TO POLITICS

REF: (A) NAIROBI 2821, (B) NAIROBI A-02 OF JAN 7, 1977,
(C) 76 NAIROBI 13860, (D) 76 NAIROBI 11334, (E) 76 NAIROBI 11217

1. SUMMARY: FORMER KENYA VICE-PRESIDENT JARAMOGI OGINGA
ODINGA GAVE PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 2 LAMBASTING THOSE WHO
KEPT HIM FROM PARTICIPATING IN KANU ELECTIONS AND ANNOUNCING
HIS RETURN TO AN ACTIVE ROLE IN KENYA POLITICS. KENYAN
MEDIA GAVE MINIMAL COVERAGE TO PRESS CONFERENCE COMPLETELY
IGNORING ODINGA'S MORE SENSITIVE ALLEGATIONS. IT IS UNCLEAR
WHETHER THIS MOVE REPRESENTS CALCULATED EFFORT TO HELP
MUNGAI GROUP IN KANU NATIONAL-LEVEL ELECTIONS OR WHETHER
A FRUSTRATED ODINGA IS ATTEMPTING TO TAKE HIS CASE OVER
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THE HEADS OF THOSE WHO HAVE THWARTED HIM TO THE KENYAN
PEOPLE. END SUMMARY.

2. IN 6-PAGE STATEMENT DISTRIBUTED TO PRESS ODINGA
SAID HE HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY MANY PEOPLE IN PUBLIC
LIFE WHO PERCEIVED A VACUUM IN KENYAN POLITICS SINCE
HIS 1969 DETENTION. HE LASHED OUT AT KANU ACTING

SECGEN MATANO AND NATIONAL ORGANIZING SECRETARY MUNOKO, ACCUSING THEM OF BEING TOOLS OF SMALL CLIQUE OF POLITICIANS (READ MOI AND NJONJO) "WHOSE SOLE INTENTION IS TO BAR MY PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS OF THE COUNTRY, AS WELL AS TO FRUSTRATE PRACTICE OF DEMOCRACY IN KANU." CITING HISTORY OF EFFORTS TO BAR HIM FROM RUNNING FOR OFFICE IN SIAYA, HE CHARGED THAT "... ARBITRARY AND UN-CONSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES HAVE RAISED FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN OUR COUNTRY." ODINGA ASSERTED THAT HE HAD TRIED TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT, BUT IT HAD BEEN MADE IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO DO SO. HE SAID, THEREFORE, THAT HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO BREAK SILENCE AND TELL PEOPLE VIA THE PRESS THAT HE IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT TREND OF POLITICS IN KENYA AND THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF WITHDRAWING FROM PUBLIC LIFE. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, ODINGA SAID HE HAD SUPPORTED CHANGE THE CONSTITUTION MOVEMENT LAST FALL. IT WAS PROBABLY NOT A COINCIDENCE THAT PRESS CONFERENCE WAS HELD ON SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF ASSASSINATION OF CHARISMATIC POPULIST LEADER, J.M. KARIUKI. (FULL TEXT OF ODINGA STATEMENT POUCHED TO AF/E).

3. THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS NOT GIVEN PROMINENT PLAY BY THE KENYAN MEDIA. WHILE VOK RADIO DID INCLUDE STORY IN NEWS BROADCAST EVENING OF MARCH 2, DAILY NATION FAILED TO MENTION IT MARCH 3 AND STANDARD CARRIED ONLY ONE COLUMN REPORT ON INSIDE PAGE. STANDARD AND VOK IGNORED ODINGA'S SENSITIVE ACCUSATIONS, NOTING ONLY HIS DESIRE TO REENTER POLITICS AND HIS CLAIM THAT KANU CONFIDENTIAL

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ELECTIONS IN SIAYA BRANCH WERE UNFAIR.

4. ODINGA'S MOTIVES ARE NOT EXACTLY CLEAR. IT IS KNOWN THAT HE HAS WANTED TO REENTER KENYA POLITICS FOR SOME TIME (SEE REFTELS), AND THAT MOI, NJONJO AND MATANO GROUP HAS SYSTEMATICALLY BLOCKED HIM AT EVERY STEP. HIS GOING PUBLIC AT THIS TIME MAY BE CALCULATED MOVE TO SUPPORT MUNGAI GROUP AMONG LUOS AND OTHERS OF HIS (ODINGA'S) EX-SUPPORTERS THROUGHOUT KENYA IN PRE-KANU NATIONAL ELECTION MANEUVERING. YET, IN HIS STATEMENT TO PRESS ODINGA ALSO IMPLIED CRITICISM OF THOSE CONTROLLING ACCESS TO PRESIDENT FOR HIS INABILITY TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT. GROUP AROUND THE PRESIDENT WOULD INCLUDE MINISTER FOR STATE KOINANGE, WHO IS MUNGAI ALLY, AND POSSIBLY EVEN MUNGAI HIMSELF. FURTHERMORE, IF ODINGA'S PRESS CONFERENCE WERE A MUNGAI STAGE-MANAGED PRODUCTION, CLEARED AT HIGHEST LEVELS, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN BANNER TREATMENT BY STANDARD, WHICH IS PUBLISHED BY MUNGAI'S NEPHEW, UDI GECAGA.

THUS IT IS POSSIBLE ODINGA MAY HAVE ACTED MORE OR LESS
ON HIS OWN AS RESULT OF BITTERNESS WHICH HAS BUILT
UP AFTER FULL YEAR OF DISCREET EFFORT TO REASSERT HIMSELF
POLITICALLY.

5. IN LONGER TERM, ODINGA MAY BE LOOKING TOWARD A
REGROUPING OF POLITICAL FORCES IN KENYA WHICH WILL
GIVE SCOPE TO A LEFT OF CENTER PHILOSOPHY. THERE IS
SOME REASON TO BELIEVE THAT ODINGA, NGEI (KAMBA) AND
MULIRO (ABALUHYA) MIGHT FORM NUCLEUS OF SUCH A GROUP.
THESE MEN, AS WELL AS OTHER LEFT OF CENTER PERSONALITIES
SUCH AS M.P. GEORGE ANYONA (KISII), ARE ALL KNOWN TO
HAVE THROWN IN WITH MUNGAI GROUP, WITH RESULT THAT EVEN
ARCH-CAPITALIST MUNGAI, WHOSE POLITICAL AMBITIONS WILL
PERSIST REGARDLESS OF OUTCOME OF KANU ELECTIONS, MAY
ALIGN HIMSELF WITH LEFT OF CENTER PHILOSOPHY.

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